



Josephine County, Oregon

Daniel E. DeYoung, Herman E. Baertschiger Jr., and Darin J. Fowler

Josephine County Courthouse
Board of Commissioners' Office
500 NW 6th Street, Dept 6
Grants Pass, OR 97526
(541) 474-5221 #2

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Dan DeYoung and I am Chairman for the Josephine County Board of Commissioners which is located in Southwestern Oregon and borders Northern California. Today I am here to testify in opposition to HR 980, Southwestern Oregon Watershed & Salmon Protection Act and any other legislation that would limit the accessibility to the Natural Resources located within Josephine County.

The federal government manages approximately 73% of Josephine County, most of it being vertical, through either the US Forest Service, BLM, or the US Parks Service. The continued inability to utilize the Natural Resources located on those lands for the benefit of our citizens is detrimental to the county.

Josephine County has always been a Natural Resource County. Going back to the early days of the mid 1800's and the first discovery of gold at Sailor Diggings. Natural Resources have been a source of industry in Josephine County since before Oregon has been a state. The counties name "Josephine" was taken from one of the earliest miner's daughters and reflects the importance of mining of that day. The walls of the Courthouse are made of slats of marble which was made from Marble Mountain Quarry in Josephine County.

Subsurface minerals in Josephine County have been vital throughout the years, not only to the citizens of Josephine County but to the citizens of the United States, especially in the war efforts over the years, most importantly WWII, with the high demand of chrome and nickel. After the war, timber on the surface of these lands also became a very important part of Josephine County's economy. The timber was used to build our communities here in the United States, but also those of Europe and other areas of the world that were decimated by WWII.

Josephine County had dozens of sawmills and that industry was the primary employer to our citizens, and now those sawmills are silent, not one exists today. No other place on this planet grows timber as well as those lands west of the Cascade Range in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. Our industry was thriving up until the spotted owl was designated endangered. At that time, access was limited to those lands at the detriment of our communities.

Because of the lack of management of these lands, wildfire has been the new threat to our community. I know most of you have watched it on TV, our citizens live it. We cannot afford any more lack of management or access to these lands. We do not want our communities to experience the same catastrophic event which Paradise, California endured. This bill would limit management on these lands at the detriment of our communities.

Locking up more lands and a hands-off management approach will lead to more catastrophic wildfire and its ability to move across the landscape and threaten our communities. In recent years the Commissioners proposed several ballot questions concerning the management of these lands. The results to these questions are submitted for the record. Overwhelmingly the citizens want management of these lands. I want this committee to know that the Josephine County Board of Commissioners are adamantly opposed to this legislation.

Again, I thank the Committee for letting me testify today and would be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Daniel E. DeYoung
Josephine County Commissioner